

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-13 ACDA-12 EB-08 COME-00
TRSE-00 OMB-01 AID-05 IGA-02 STR-05 /129 W
-----032834 021505Z /50

R 011945Z DEC 77
FM USINT HAVANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 632
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABAB
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 HAVANA 0725

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MILI MARR XJ CU UR AO ET SO
SUBJ: ALLEGED CURRENT CUBAN VIEWS ON AFRICA AND POLICY TOWARD US

1. WELL-INFORMED, BUT CASTRO-SYMPATHIZING, MEXICAN JOURNALIST PROVIDES ACCOUNT OF CURRENT CUBAN THINKING ON AFRICA AND POLICY TOWARD US. IF ACCURATE, ACCOUNT SUGGESTS THAT CUBANS WILL NOT IN NEAR-TERM SUPPORT INTERNAL RECONCILIATION IN ANGOLA AND THAT THEY HAVE BEEN PRESSED BY SOVIETS TOWARD IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH US. VERACITY OF REPORT IS UNCERTAIN. END SUMMARY

2. MEXICAN RESIDENT JOURNALIST AND CASTRO-SYMPATHIZER MARTA SOLIS PROVIDED FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF CURRENT CUBAN POLICY TO USINT OFFICER (GLASSMAN), NOVEMBER 24. REPORT IS ALLEGEDLY BASED ON RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH FIDEL CASTRO AND CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ. MISS SOLIS IS GENERALLY VERY WELL-INFORMED AND ACCOUNT BELOW APPEARS PLAUSIBLE. IT CANNOT BE EXCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF FOLLOWING MAY BE DISINFORMATION.
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SOLIS ACCOUNT FOLLOWS:

3. WITH REGARD TO ANGOLA, CUBANS KNOW THAT NETO IS UNPOPULAR AND WEAK. CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ SAID THAT, IF RECONCILIATION TOOK PLACE NOW BETWEEN THE MPLA AND UNITA, NETO WOULD LOSE CONTROL. FOR THIS REASON, NETO REJECTED RECENT UNITA FEELERS ON POSSIBLE MPLA-UNITA DIALOGUE.

CUBANS WISH TO AVOID SIUTATION IN WHICH NETO IS BARGAINING DOMESTICALLY FROM A POSITION OF POLITICAL WEAKNESS. THEREFORE, CUBAN TACTIC IS TO GIVE NETO TIME AND PROTECTION TO ALLOW HIM TO DEVELOP NATIONAL POLITICAL AND MILITARY CADRES NECESSARY TO FORTIFY HIS POSITION. IN MEANTIME, CUBANS AND NETO WILL OPPOSE ANY DISCUSSIONS ON INTERNAL ANGOLAN RECONCILIATION.

4. PRESERVATION OF NETO IN POWER IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT FOR CUBANS BOTH BECAUSE NETO REPRESENTS SPECIFICALLY SOCIALIST (AS OPPOSED TO "BOURGEOIS NATIONALIST") POLITICAL LINE IN WHICH CASTRO SINCERELY BELIEVES AND TO WHICH CUBAN PRESTIGE IS TIED AND, SECOND, BECAUSE CUBANS WISH TO CONVEY SIGNAL OF FIRMNESS TO SOVIETS. CUBANS KNOW THAT WIFE OF NITO ALVES (LEADER OF MAY COUP AGAINST NETO) WAS ARRESTED CARRYING LETTER TO SOVIET EMBASSY. CUBANS FEEL THAT MOSCOW AT LEAST TACITLY BACKED ALVES COUP ATTEMPT. CUBANS VIEW NITO ALVES AS ANOTHER ANIBAL ESCALANTE. (COMMENT: ESCALANTE WAS MOSCOW-LINING CUBAN COMMUNIST WHO ALLEGEDLY SOUGHT, WITH MOSCOW'S TACIT APPROVAL, IN 1962 AND 1968 TO SEIZE POWER FROM CASTRO). CUBANS BELIEVE, THEREFORE, THAT IT IS POLITICALLY IMPORTANT TO PRESERVE NETO IN POWER IN ORDER TO DISCOURAGEANY MOSCOW ASPIRATIONS TO DEAL LIGHTLY WITH, OR PRESSURE, CASTRO DOMESTICALLY OR INTERNATIONALLY.

5. CUBANS WERE TAKEN ABACK BY SOVIET ACTIONS IN ANGOLA, PARTICULARLY THE NITO ALVES COUP ATTEMPT. CARLOS RAFAEL
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RODRIGUEZ STATED SOME TIME AGO THAT CUBA HAD NOTHING TO FEAR ECONOMICALLY OR POLITICALLY AS LONG AS BREZHNEV IS ALIVE. NOW, SINCE THE ALVES' COUP, CUBAN SUSPICION AND DISCONTENT WITH MOSCOW HAVE GROWN.

6. ON ETHIOPIA, FIDEL CASTRO SAID THAT CUBA WOULD NOT MILITARILY INTERVENE IN THE CONTEST.

7. WITH REGARD TO US-CUBANRELATIONS, CARLOS RAFAEL RODRIGUEZ RETURNED FROM HIS EARLY NOVEMBER TRIP TO MOSCOW IMPRESSED BY NEW PROGRESS IN US-SOVIET RELATIONS. SOVIETS COMMUNICATED TO BOTH RODIRIGUEZ AND RAUL CASTRO, WHO PRIDES HIMSELF ON HIS GOOD SOVIET PARTY CONTACTS, THAT THEY ARE IN FAVOR OF FURTHER FORWARD MOVEMENT IN CUBAN RELATIONS WITH THE US. CUBANS SEE SOVIET MOTIVATIONS NOT ONLY AS POLITICAL (EASING SOVIET DETENTE WITH US), BUT ALSO AS ECONOMIC. CUBANS BELIEVE THAT OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES CONTINUE TO BE ANGRY WITH SOVIETS FOR PUSHING CUBANS INTO COMECON, AN ACTION WHICH FORCES ALL COMMUNIST STATES TO SHARE SOVIET BURDEN OF AIDING CUBA. CUBANS BELIEVE THAT SOVIETS EXPECT DEVELOPMENT OF CUBAN TRADE WITH US TO EASE ECONOMIC BURDEN ON USSR/EE. INDEED, SOLIS REMARKED, SHE PERSONALLY

WITNESSED (SEVERAL YEARS AGO) SOVIET AMBASSADOR
ARGUING (WITH FIDEL) THAT CUBA SHOULD SEEK TO ENCOURAGE
US TOURISM HERE. AT THAT TIME, CASTRO HAD ARGUED AGAINST
DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM. NOW, HE HAS ACCEPTED MOSCOW LINE.

8. FIDEL CASTRO CONTINUES TO SPEAK VERY HIGHLY OF
PRESIDENT CARTER AS A PERSON. HE HAS POINTED OUT THAT HE
WOULD LIKE TO HAVE A PERSONAL MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT
AT SOME POINT.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 HAVANA 0725

9. ON DOMESTIC STRUCTURE OF POWER, SOLIS CHARACTERIZED
ALL CASTRO ENTOURAGE, WITH EXCEPTION OF CARLOS RAFAEL
RODRIGUEZ, AS EXECUTORS OF POLICY. RODRIGUEZ, IN CONTRAST
TO OTHERS, DOES PROVIDE SOME ADVICE TO CASTRO ON POLICY. (MOST
INFORMED SOURCES AVAILABLE TO USINT TEND TO CONFIRM THIS
APPRAISAL.)

10. COMMENT: SOLIS DESCRIPTION OF CUBAN ANGOLA POLICY
SERVES CUBAN INTERESTS IN THAT IT PROVIDES A REASON POSSIBLY
PALATABLE TO US (CUBAN DEFIANCE OF SOVIET EFFORT TO TOPPLE
NETO) THAT JUSTIFIES CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA. IF REPORT IS
ACCURATE, IMPLICATION MIGHT BE THAT WESTERN GESTURES TOWARD
NETO (THAT IS, MOVES FORTIFYING HIS DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL
POSITION) COULD LEAD TO CUBAN-ANGOLAN ACCEPTANCE OF MPLA-
UNITA RECONCILIATION AND DRAWDOWN OF CUBAN

MILITARY PRESENCE. USINT, HOWEVER, HAS RECEIVED NO SUCH HINTS FROM CUBAN OFFICIALS. INDEED, HIGH-LEVEL CUBANS HAVE MADE STRONG CASE TO US AGAINST ANY FUTURE POSSIBILITY
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OF MPLA-UNITA RECONCILIATION. WE CANNOT, HOWEVER, RULE OUT THAT SOLIS ACCOUNT MAY REPRESENT ACTUAL GOC REASONING.

11. WITH REGARD TO SOLIS' SUGGESTIONS OF CUBAN-SOVIET TENSION OVER ANGOLA, SOME SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAVE MADE NEGATIVE REMARKS ABOUT CUBAN PRESENCE IN ANGOLA, BUT NONE HAVE EVER TOUCHED ON THE ALVES' EPISODE. LIKEWISE, NO CUBAN OFFICIAL HAS EVER CONVEYED THE SOLIS' LINE. NONETHELESS, WE HAVE NOTICED A LIVELY CURIOSITY ON PART OF CUBAN OFFICIALS WITH REGARD TO WHAT SOVIETS SAY TO US OR AFRICA. IF NO TENSION EXISTS BETWEEN GOC AND SOVIETS, THERE IS AT LEAST ELEMENT OF SUSPICION PRESENT.

12. ON SOVIET POSTURE TOWARD CUBAN RAPPROCHEMENT WITH US, SOVIET EMBASSY PERSONNEL HAVE MADE CLEAR THAT, WHILE MOSCOW IS IN FAVOR OF SOME OPENING FOR ECONOMIC REASONS, SOVIETS ARE PREOCCUPIED AT SAME TIME THAT ERRATIC CASTRO MAY CAST HIS FATE WITH US. CASTRO, WE THINK, SEEKS TO ENCOURAGE THESE FEARS IN ORDER TO MAXIMIZE HIS BARGAINING LEVERAGE WITH MOSCOW.

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